

VZCZCXRO7908  
RR RUEHDE RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHMS #0572 2241410  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 111410Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9844  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000572

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/11/2018

TAGS: [MU](#) [XF](#) [XI](#)

SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION TO SULTAN'S LIBYA VISIT

REF: MUSCAT 308

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 B and D

[11](#). (U) Oman media reports Sultan Qaboos bin Said will arrive in Libya today for an official visit with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Over the next several days, the two leaders will discuss the Oman-Libya relationship and explore opportunities for further cooperation. They will also discuss broader Arab and international issues.

[12](#). (SBU) This may be the most significant stop on the Sultan's summer travel itinerary as the Minister of the Diwan Royal Court, the Minister of Royal Office, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Economy, the Deputy Chairman of Financial Affairs, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, the Minister of Transport and Communications, and the Charge d'Affaires of the Sultanate's Embassy in Libya will accompany him. This is the first Omani media reporting of the Sultan's three-month long personal holiday, since he departed for his first stop in the UAE. The Italian media reported extensively on his visits to Bari and Palermo.

[13](#). (C) Comment: It has been well over 20 years since Qaboos and Gaddafi, the only Arab ruler whose length of term in office exceeds Qaboos', last met. Rumor has it that their first meeting -- most likely at one of the few Arab League summits that Qaboos has deigned to attend in his near 38-year reign -- did not go well and no doubt explains, in part, the Sultan's lack of enthusiasm for the mercurial Libyan. In meetings with USG officials throughout the nineties and up to 2005, he and his government often spoke highly critically of Gaddafi and his unpredictable and dangerous leadership style. Only in 2006, following Gaddafi's rehabilitation and rapprochement with the U.S. and others, did the two countries agree to open embassies in respective capitals. We have been told that the Libyans pressed hard for a visit by the Sultan and, as he told the Ambassador in April (reftel), he already had planned to be in the neighborhood.

GRAPPO